



House of Representatives

File No. 977

General Assembly

January Session, 2009

(Reprint of File No. 515)

Substitute House Bill No. 6536
As Amended by House Amendment
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner
May 18, 2009

AN ACT CONCERNING LOW INCOME ENERGY PROGRAMS.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 16-262c of the general statutes is amended by
2 adding subsection (g) as follows (*Effective from passage*):

3 (NEW) (g) The Department of Public Utility Control shall conduct a
4 contested case proceeding to investigate the feasibility, structure and
5 cost of implementing a discounted rate system to make gas and
6 electricity more affordable for low-income customers. On or before
7 January 1, 2010, the department shall report, in accordance with the
8 provisions of section 11-4a to the joint standing committee of the
9 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to energy
10 regarding the results of such investigation.

11 Sec. 2. Section 16a-41b of the general statutes is repealed and the
12 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

13 (a) There shall be a Low-Income Energy Advisory Board which shall
14 consist of the following members: The [Secretary of the Office of Policy

15 and Management or the secretary's designee; the Commissioner of
16 Social Services or the commissioner's designee; the] executive director
17 of the Commission on Aging; a representative of each electric and gas
18 public service company designated by each such company; [the
19 chairperson of the Department of Public Utility Control or a
20 commissioner of the Department of Public Utility Control designated
21 by the chairperson;] the Consumer Counsel or the counsel's designee;
22 the executive director of Operation Fuel; the executive director of
23 Infoline; the director of the Connecticut Local Administrators of Social
24 Services; the executive director of Legal Assistance Resource Center of
25 Connecticut; the Connecticut president of AARP; a designee of the
26 Norwich Public Utility; a designee of the Connecticut Petroleum
27 Dealers Association; and a representative of the community action
28 agencies administering energy assistance programs under contract
29 with the Department of Social Services, designated by the Connecticut
30 Association for Community Action. The Secretary of the Office of
31 Policy and Management, the Commissioner of Social Services and the
32 chairperson of the Public Utilities Control Authority, or their
33 designees, shall serve as nonvoting ex-officio members of the board.

34 (b) The Low-Income Energy Advisory Board shall (1) advise and
35 assist the Office of Policy and Management and the Department of
36 Social Services in the planning, development, implementation and
37 coordination of energy-assistance-related programs and policies, [and]
38 (2) advise and assist in the planning, development, implementation
39 and coordination of all low-income weatherization assistance
40 programs and policies [, shall] so that low income weatherization
41 programs, including those implemented pursuant to sections 7-233y,
42 16-32f, 16-245m and 16a-22l, and those administered by the
43 Department of Social Services, meet a combined goal, within existing
44 budgetary resources, to weatherize at least thirty per cent of low
45 income eligible households and reduce energy consumption in each of
46 such households by at least twenty per cent not later than five years
47 after the effective date of this section, (3) advise the Department of
48 Public Utility Control regarding the impact of utility rates and policies,

49 and [shall] (4) make recommendations to the General Assembly
50 regarding legislation and plans subject to legislative approval to
51 ensure affordable access to residential energy services to low-income
52 state residents.

53 (c) The [Secretary of the Office of Policy and Management or the
54 person designated by the secretary pursuant to subsection (a) of this
55 section shall be the chairperson] members of the board shall annually
56 elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from among the
57 membership of the board.

58 (d) The [Secretary of] Low-Income Advisory Board shall be within
59 the Office of Policy and Management [shall convene the first meeting
60 of the board not later than August 1, 2005. The secretary shall provide
61 notice of meetings to the members of Low-Income Energy Advisory
62 Board, provide space for such meetings, maintain minutes and publish
63 reports of the board] for administrative purposes only.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	16-262c
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	16a-41b

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: See Below

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

Section 1 of the bill requires the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) to conduct a contested case proceeding. DPUC currently holds approximately 350 proceedings annually. It is not anticipated that this additional proceedings will result in a fiscal impact to the agency.

Section 2 of the bill specifies that the Low-Income Energy Advisory Board shall advise and assist in the planning, development, implementation and coordination of weatherization programs so that all such programs shall service at least 30% of eligible households and reduce energy consumption by 20% within 5 years. The Board can assist in these activities with no additional fiscal impact to the state. However, should this be read as to mandate these programs to service additional households beyond the available federal funds, an indeterminate state cost may result.

House 'A' makes several changes to the underlying bill that do not result in any fiscal impact.

The Out Years

There is no fiscal impact in the out years.

OLR Bill Analysis**sHB 6536 (as amended by House "A")******AN ACT CONCERNING LOW INCOME ENERGY PROGRAMS.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Public Utility Control (DPUC) to conduct a contested case (quasi-judicial) proceeding to investigate the feasibility, structure, and cost of implementing rate discounts to make gas and electricity more affordable for low-income customers. It requires DPUC, by January 1, 2010, to report to the Energy and Technology Committee on the results of its investigation.

The bill sets a goal of weatherizing, over the next five years, at least 30% of low-income housing units. It makes several changes to the Low Income Energy Advisory Board.

*House Amendment "A" (1) deletes a provision in the bill that eliminated a person's need to reapply for fuel assistance programs for three years once his or her application had been approved, (2) modifies the bill's goal of weatherizing 30% of low income housing units, and (3) adds the provisions regarding the Low Income Energy Advisory Board.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

LOW INCOME ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD

Under current law, this board helps the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) and the Department of Social Services (DSS) plan, develop, implement, and coordinate programs and policies related to energy assistance and weatherization. The bill requires that the board help plan, develop, implement, and coordinate all weatherization programs so that the DSS-administered programs and those

implemented by other parties meet a combined goal of weatherizing 30% of eligible low-income households and reducing their energy use by at least 20% over the next five years. The other programs include those implemented by electric and gas companies, municipal electric utilities, and by the Connecticut Municipal Electric Energy Cooperative on behalf of municipal electric utilities. The board must do this within existing budgetary resources.

By law, the DPUC chairperson and OPM secretary, or their designees, are members of the board. The bill specifies that they are nonvoting, ex-officio members, and adds the DSS commissioner or his designee as a nonvoting, ex-officio member.

Under current law, the OPM secretary or his designee is the board's chairperson. The bill instead requires the board members to elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson annually.

Finally, the bill places the board in OPM for administrative purposes only.

BACKGROUND

Related Bills

sSB 1101 (File 473), reported favorably by the Energy and Technology Committee, requires DPUC to conduct a proceeding on electric and gas rate discounts, and the electric and gas companies to implement such rates in accordance with DPUC's decision in the proceeding.

sSB 983 (File 254) contains provisions similar to those in this bill regarding the membership of the Low Income Energy Advisory Board.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Program Review and Investigations Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference

Yea 12 Nay 0 (03/09/2009)

Energy and Technology Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 21 Nay 0 (03/19/2009)

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 12 Nay 6 (04/16/2009)